

**Statement of Congressman Patrick McHenry
Ranking Member**

Subcommittee on Information Policy, Census, and National Archives

"Status of 2010 Census Operations"

March 5, 2009

Thank you, Chairman Clay, and congratulations on continuing your Chairmanship of this Subcommittee in the 111th Congress.

I know your father served as Chairman of the Committee on the Post Office and Civil Service, which has since merged with Oversight and Government Reform, and I'm glad to see you are continuing his tradition of bipartisanship and open dialogue with the Minority. I share your commitment to ensuring a full and accurate census, and look forward to working with you and the Members of this Subcommittee to ensure every single American is counted in 2010.

In mid-2008, the full Oversight and Government Reform Committee met to discuss the challenges and funding problems facing the Census Bureau and identify ways in which to facilitate a full and accurate count in 2010. Today, almost a year later, we have the opportunity to ask the Bureau exactly where it is in its preparations for the decennial census, where it should be, and how, with Congress's help, it can get there.

The decennial census is a huge undertaking – the largest peacetime mobilization the country has ever seen. The data that are collected affect how government and businesses allocate their resources from the state-level all the way down to small towns and communities. Therefore it is important that the Bureau be as open and honest as possible about their preparations for a full count in 2010 and any associated problems that they might encounter. I think I speak for both myself and Chairman Clay when I say this Subcommittee will not point fingers if problems that exist and the need for changes to existing plans are disclosed early and often.

This includes letting us know about any funding needs that may come up along the way. The Bureau recently received \$1 billion in the Stimulus, and another \$2.7 billion has been set aside specifically for the 2010 census in the Fiscal Year 2009 Omnibus Appropriations Act which is currently before the Senate. Congress has demonstrated its intent to ensure that the Census Bureau has every resource it needs to conduct a full and accurate count. With a sufficiently funded Census Bureau, we can ensure a fair and thorough 2010 Census that counts everyone and leaves no justification for using “accounting” methods.

Finally, I’d like to stress the importance of protecting the integrity of the census from manipulation from either party. Yesterday, in a meeting with Senate Commerce Committee leaders, Commerce Secretary-Designee Gary Locke expressed desire for a Census Bureau free of political pressure from the White House. I am encouraged by his comments, and hope that President Obama accepts the Governor’s wishes and restores control of the census to the Department of Commerce. Following that, the next Census Director must also state his opinion on a non-partisan and accurate census.

Based on news reports, Governor Locke did express his intention to employ statistical sampling as an “accuracy check.” I am certain that during the Governor’s confirmation hearing he will clarify what exactly that means. What it must not mean is that sampling will be used in any way to manipulate census data for partisan gain.

Chairman Clay and I share the goal of ensuring that every individual in America, regardless of race or socioeconomic status or any other characteristic, will be counted. All ideas brought before this Subcommittee to help us achieve this goal will be given thorough consideration. I am confident that together we can formulate a plan that ensures a full and accurate count in 2010.

Again, thank you Mr. Chairman for holding this hearing and I look forward to hearing from our witnesses.